Architecture, Materiality and Society

Connecting Sociology of Architecture with Science and Technology Studies

Edited by
Anna-Lisa Müller and
Werner Reichmann

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The journey of this book started in late 2012 with the idea of organizing a workshop on 'Researching Architecture and Society' at Bielefeld University, Germany. As the two original organizers were a sociologist of architecture and a science studies scholar, the workshop was soon subtitled 'What Can a Sociology of Architecture Learn From Science and Technology Studies?' Some answers to this question can now be found in this volume. We do not pretend to have answered all the questions we posed at the beginning of this journey. However, we are convinced that the contributions in this volume will deepen the discussion of the interrelation between materiality and society in general and architecture and society in particular.

The book intends to enrich the scientific debate about architecture and society in three regards. First, it formulates a theoretical framework for understanding architecture, materiality, space and social context as strongly interrelated. Second, it provides various (empirical) case studies that discuss the theoretical framework and show its possibilities and also its limits. Third, it gives insights into methods applicable to researching the intersection of architecture and society and formulates a methodological toolkit for future research. We hope that with this volume we will encourage a debate on how to research both the role of architecture in and for society and the (possible limits of the) agency of materiality. An integral part of this debate would be a discussion on the theoretical and methodological implications of such research.

This volume would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of people and institutions. We want to thank Bielefeld University and in particular the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology for their generous support and the infrastructure they provided in the realization of our initial workshop. We are grateful to the University of Bremen, which provided funding for the publishing process, and the Urban and Regional Sociology section of the German Sociological Association as well as its working committee, Sociology of Architecture, for generously supporting our work. We thank Stefan Laube and Ignacio Farias for their intellectual support prior to the workshop. Sincere thanks are given to Karin Knorr Cetina and Martina Löw, who opened our workshop with an inspiring dialogue on the intersection of the sociology of architecture and science and technology studies.

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Anna-Lisa Müller and Werner Reichmann
Verden (Aller), Bremen and Konstanz
October 2014

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Anna-Lisa Müller is a senior researcher at the Department of Geography at the University of Bremen, Germany. Her main research interests include the interrelation of materiality and sociality in postmodern societies, urban developments and international processes of transmigration. She obtained her PhD in 2013 at Bielefeld University, Germany. In 2012 and 2013, Anna-Lisa Müller was a fellow of the residency programme *Scholars in Residence* organized by the German Goethe Institute and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI). Her most recent book is *Green Creative City* (2013).

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Introduction

Anna-Lisa Müller, University of Bremen and
Werner Reichmann, University of Konstanz

This volume consists of ten chapters. Each of them can be read and discussed individually, but reading several or all of them will bring benefits, in particular a greater understanding of the central theme of the volume. Chapters 1 and 10 have a slightly different role in and for the volume than the other chapters. The first chapter introduces the theme by posing the reader a puzzle. It tells the story of the German Intelligence Service (BND) moving its headquarters from Pullach in southern Germany to Berlin and asks what this move reveals about the role of architecture in and for (German) society. It then introduces what we call the fried-egg model of architecture, which is our attempt to conceptualize the interrelation of four concepts central to this volume: social context, space, materiality and architecture. With the help of this model, we formulate definitions of terms the volume's contributors elaborate on in their individual chapters. These chapters are empirical studies and theoretical considerations of the central theme of this volume. In Chapter 10 we take on the task posed by this volume – constituting a sociology of architecture using science and technology studies – and outline both a sociology of architecture and a methodology for future empirical studies in this field.

Please be aware that in the following chapters all empirical data that were originally in a language other than English were translated by the respective authors. To avoid repetition, we have refrained from mentioning this fact in the individual chapters.